

Thursday, June 24

Pastor Jack mentioned an article from 10 years ago by a journalist, David Brooks. In that article ("It's not about you." *The New York Times* Op-Ed Page, May 30, 2011) Brooks, wrote, "If you sample some of the commencement addresses being broadcast on C-Span these days, you see that many graduates are told to: Follow your passion, chart your own course, march to the beat of your own drummer, follow your dreams and find yourself."

Brooks made the observation, "Most successful young people don't look inside and then plan life. They look outside and find a problem, which summons their life." This is really how anyone approaches life and responds to the needs of others. It makes sense, however, many are the times in which people's needs are apparent and nothing is accomplished to alleviate their suffering. What need do you see in the world that moves you toward making a difference in the lives of others? How is your life shaped by the needs of others? Write your thoughts here and consider sharing them with the leadership of Central Church. Think of what could happen if a team came together around the needs you see in the world!

Friday, June 25

Read II Corinthians 6:1-13. Toward the end of his message, Pastor Jack shared a conversation with a member of the church who admitted to not understanding the dynamics of racial reconciliation or the inclusion of LGBTQ+ people. The woman did understand Paul's call to a mission of love and reconciliation. Pastor Jack then mentioned that there are a lot of things we do not fully understand, such as God's tremendous grace and mercy. We claim the experience of a peace that surpasses our understanding (Philippians 4:7). What we can understand is that we are to love and care for others, demonstrating the same compassion and mercy we have experienced from God. How does this view of understanding move you towards being a counter-cultural follower of Christ? Write your ideas here.

Message Notes – June 20, 2021

*The Counter-Culture Christian**

- I. When it comes to Hollywood, being a _____ could ruin your career. So says Patricia Heaton.
 - A. Despite the setbacks, Heaton is determined to hold onto her _____ even if there's a personal and professional cost.
 - B. Jim Caviezel was ostracized following his portrayal of God's _____ in *The Passion of the Christ*.
 - C. So, if you want to be revolutionary and _____ in today's culture, just sign up to be an openly committed _____ of Jesus the Christ.
- II. This brings us to one of the radicals and counter-revolutionaries of the mid-first century, the apostle _____.
 - A. Paul's experience of serving Jesus the Christ has been _____ to say the least: troubles, hardships, distresses, beatings, riots, sleepless nights, imprisonment, hard work, hunger and more.
 - B. Paul is not saying that to be a _____ Christian, that we should likewise experience all these dreadful things.
 - C. Paul did ask the Corinthians to sign up for reconciliation and _____.
 - D. Paul's experience teaches us today, that if we're radicals, we cannot pretend that we _____ what we're signing up for.
 1. Forget that. We don't.
 2. We just don't know where _____ is taking us.
 3. Robert Fulghum says in his journal: "The life you _____ can get in the way of the life that's _____ for you."

*II Corinthians 6:1-13

- III. Having said that, thousands of people today are willing to take on possible _____.
- A. To truly be in a ministry of reconciliation and love, we need to be _____ of all people
 - B. David Brooks, wrote in *The New York Times*, “Most successful young people don't look _____ and then plan life. They look _____ and find a problem, which summons their life.”
 - C. I want for our graduates and students to know that _____ is calling you to love and reconciliation.
 - D. Open wide your hearts to the possibility of God’s _____ to love and lead a life of reconciliation.

Daily Devotional Guide

The following is a daily devotional and study guide meant to enhance your understanding of the message and grow as a Christian.

It is offered for your personal reflection or to share with others.

Monday, June 21

Pastor Jack’s message yesterday began with the mention of three Hollywood actors who are Christians: Ned Beatty, Patricia Heaton and Jim Caviezel. Heaton said that being a Christian in Hollywood can lead to exclusion and fewer work opportunities. Caviezel, after portraying Jesus in *The Passion of Christ*, found it difficult to find another director willing to cast him in a movie. He became a motivational speaker for a while until he was cast in the popular TV Series, *Person of Interest*. Being a Christian in Hollywood raises some red flags.

Have you ever experienced difficulties – been denied a job, not promoted, or warned about sharing your faith – in the workplace or in general? How has your faith affected other’s view of you? Do people you encounter on a day to day basis even know you’re a Christian? Meditate on these questions and write your thoughts here.

Tuesday, June 22

Read II Corinthians 6:1-13. Yesterday we talked about Christian actors making it in Hollywood. Often, acting careers are negatively affected if an actor admits to being a faithful Christian. The question asked during the message was, “Is it easy being a Christian anywhere?” The Apostle Paul told of the difficulties that he and his companions endured while in ministry with the Corinthians troubles, hardships, distresses, beatings, riots, sleepless nights, imprisonment, hard work, hunger and m

Hopefully, you have not experienced beatings, riots and imprisonment because of your Christian faith. We should realize that Paul lived 20 Centuries ago and today is a much gentler time. That still doesn’t mean that Christ-followers do not have difficulties today because of their faith. Do you know people who have suffered because of their Christian beliefs? Have you suffered because of your faith? We asked in yesterday’s devotion, “Do people you encounter on a day to day basis even know you’re a Christian?” Ponder these questions and write your thought here.

Wednesday, June 23

Read II Corinthians 6:1-13. The Apostle Paul was a radical and Counter-cultural revolutionary of the first century. When lines of separation were being drawn between the Jewish Religious establishment of the day and the new Christian movement, Paul was encouraging the Corinthians (and us) to be engaged with others in a mission and ministry of love and reconciliation. That call to love and reconciliation is as radical today as it was 2000 years ago.

Have you experienced your Christian faith as “counter-cultural?” Do you consider the teaching of Christ to be radical? To what extent are you willing to practice your Christian faith, which would bring you closer to being a counter-cultural Christian? Write your thoughts here as you pray for God’s vision for your life.